

Therapy Chat Episode 332



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[00:00:00] **Laura Reagan:** Therapy Chat Podcast, Episode 332.

[00:00:04] **Announcer:** This is the Therapy Chat podcast with Laura Reagan LCSW-C. The information shared in this podcast is not a substitute for seeking help from a licensed mental health professional. And now here's your host, Laura Reagan, LCSW-C.

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[00:01:31] Hi, welcome back to Therapy Chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. And if you've been listening for the past few weeks, you've heard several episodes about Equine Assisted Psychotherapy.

[00:01:44] And that's something that I've talked about before on the podcast. And I've interviewed other guests about previously, but you might be wondering is animal assisted therapy really beneficial? Does it just make us "feel good", but not [00:02:00] have a mental health benefit. And I think our conversation that you're going to hear today will help you understand in a different way what is happening during an animal assisted therapy session.

[00:02:14] My guest today is Phillip Tedeschi. Philip Tedeschi is the founder and formerly the executive director of the Institute for Human Animal Connection and a clinical professor at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work. So when I talked with Philip, he was still the executive director, and now he is still there with that program, but he's not leading it.

[00:02:39] He still teaches in the program. So this is someone who really embodies connection between humans and animals and it comes through as he speaks. So I found this to be a very interesting, deeply moving, conversation. I hope you will [00:03:00] enjoy it too. Let's dive right in to my conversation from a few years ago with Philip Tedeschi.

[00:03:08] Hi, welcome back to Therapy Chat. Today I am very honored to be speaking with someone about a subject that you've heard about here on Therapy Chat before, but certainly not to the level that we're going to discuss today. My

guest is Philip Tedeschi LCSW, who is a professor and the executive director of the Institute for Human Animal Connection at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work, as well as the author of a recent book called Transforming Trauma: Resilience and Healing through our Connections with Animals. Philip, thanks so much for being my guest on Therapy Chat today.

[00:03:48] **Philip Tedeschi:** Well, thank you. Thanks for inviting me.

[00:03:49] **Laura Reagan:** You're so welcome. And I'm grateful that you could and were willing to come and talk with us. So let's just start off by, if [00:04:00] you, will, you telling our audience just a little bit about yourself and your work?

[00:04:04] **Philip Tedeschi:** Sure. Glad to. Yes. Well, I've been a clinical social worker for going on about almost 30 years and my area of specialization and interest started out with really focusing on populations that I would describe as at risk populations.

[00:04:24] And one of the things that interested me early on in terms of exploring strategies for working with populations that in many cases had difficulty connecting or trusting the therapeutic process we're working on very difficult issues was why, why they would want to make those changes and what would be motivators for them to engage in clinical work?

[00:04:51] So early in my career, I became very interested in experiential practice, worked as an outward bound instructor for a [00:05:00] number of years, became really interested in ways to motivate individuals and also working in non- traditional types of environments so that we could benefit from, getting out of, kind of the typical clinical types of settings.

[00:05:17] And one of the things that that brought me to early in my career was an interest in the incorporation of our relationship with other animals. And that's really the work I've been doing primarily as a, as a professor and an academic, but also have incorporated that into my practice for many years now.

[00:05:39] And so that's really the origins of it. And, if I back all the way up, I thought I wanted to be a veterinarian early on and was studying veterinary medicine. And at the time I was at the university of Wisconsin in Madison. And was asked to teach. At that time, I was working as a veterinary [00:06:00] technician in their large animal hospital and also running their equine program.

[00:06:05] And in the course of that work was asked if I would teach a class of fairly newly deinstitutionalized adults with schizophrenia who had been

diagnosed with various dimensions of schizophrenia, how to ride horses. And, and at the time I knew a lot more about horses frankly, than I did about schizophrenia, but early in my career, just that very early opportunity to expose those individuals to horses was really kind of a aha moment and altered my trajectory from there on, I remember almost immediately asking my advisor at the time that you know, that I wanted to leave vet school and study human animal connection, which he promptly told me I couldn't do because there really wasn't a focus or a field at that [00:07:00] time.

[00:07:00] And now we really do have a lot of new areas of interest in this particular area. And one of the few people that I knew was doing very interesting work with human animal connection was Jane Goodall, who was very influential for me in terms of making the choices that I made to begin to study human animal connection.

[00:07:21] And in fact was such an important colleague or mentor to me that I was asked to contribute a chapter to her 80th birthday book, um, when it was published. So, uh, so the long story short is I started out, I can kind of blame animals for ending up working with people and have been doing that ever since

[00:07:42] **Laura Reagan:** Wow, I can't help, but wonder.

[00:07:44] I don't know for other people who are listening to me, I'm familiar with Jane Goodall and her work with chimpanzees, I believe I'm right. Yeah. But it's never the only thing. Well, I guess I [00:08:00] don't want to betray how little I know about it, but. It doesn't seem to be a direct connection from, you know, us using horses or dogs or other animals in therapy to what I know of what she used to do.

[00:08:16] Can you elaborate on that a little bit, help us understand that connection?

[00:08:20] **Philip Tedeschi:** Yeah, absolutely. Well, and I think your question is good. It don't, I don't think it reflects lack of knowledge, but I think it, it reflects the fact that we often haven't, you know, entirely incorporated or included what we now know about non-human animals and really the way I would articulate that would be that if we begin to become interested in whether or not we can have relationships with other animals, other non-human animals. One of the dimensions of that very quickly becomes a question about sentience and whether or not you believe that other [00:09:00] animals besides human animals have the capacity for cognition and complex emotions like we do, because if we look at the heart of the connection between people and their

animals, even their companion animals that they live with, like their, let's say their dogs or their cats.

[00:09:18] These are animals that have very deep connections with us. And we do with them. In fact, our research shows that for many people, their companion animals are some of their most reliable relationships that they have in their life. Some of the least complicated and most reliable relationships are often occurring with non-humans.

[00:09:39] And the research also shows that we gain support like we do in any other human relationship. We gain social connectivity and support, and that this level of support is one of the primary, probably most powerful dimensions of the health promoting benefits of our connection with [00:10:00] other animals. And so it's potential, for example, to make impact on loneliness or isolation or numerous other mental health challenges.

[00:10:10] And this is just a few of the possible implications or benefits that, that's part of it. And so when you go all the way back to those people who early on began to study other non-human animals in Dr. Jane's case, studying the chimpanzees in Gambi Reserve and telling us a bit about these, incredible animals and starting to do things that other scientists at the time weren't doing, including seeing them as individual than giving them names, which was at that time not considered typical or even appropriate for scientists to study animals and give them names. But one of the things that quickly came out of her inclination to look at these individually, these animals as individuals, not just as a [00:11:00] species, was a recognition of behavior that was suggestive of complex emotion and thought and what we sometimes now call belief in animal mind. And the concept of belief in animal mind is often the basis for us recognizing that we can have relationships with other animals that are not human.

[00:11:21] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Wow. I mean, you're really getting me thinking so much, but just, one of the things that comes into my mind is how so many people think that, for example, I've heard a lot of people say that cats are stupid because they don't they don't come when you call them or they don't know their own names, which is such a, I know that's not true because I've had cats and they're, they're very, very smart, but they're also, they're very sensitive and you feel when you have a pet, you can feel that emotional connection with them, I guess if [00:12:00] you allow yourself to. But I also think that often many people aren't able to, maybe it's like they're too guarded to even allow that kind of closeness with their pet.

[00:12:11] You know what I mean? Or if, think about it.

[00:12:13] **Philip Tedeschi:** Yeah. I mean, I think that is possible. I think the other dimension of this that we probably need to acknowledge is that human beings are quite self-centered right. And could arguably be seen as quite lazy communicators, compared to many other animals where, you know, we have started to rely almost entirely just on spoken or written language.

[00:12:38] Other animals use almost everything, but that. And that those are communication tools that actually inform our work. So as a therapist, if we can actually work alongside an animal, we're bringing with us new ways of understanding, new ways of knowing and which are just as real as our ability to understand anything else.[00:13:00]

[00:13:00] Let's say. But we would have to humble ourselves to a recognition that human beings are just one species. And there's a tendency for human beings in particular, I would say kind of our modern human being, to create what we sometimes think of as the, we refer to, or has historically been referred to as the Scale Nature or the nature's ladder, where we place animals, other animals that are not human on a, on a hierarchy of sorts. And much of this is driven by religion and our teachings that were made in the image of God or that we're special because we're human.

[00:13:42] When we start to really look at qualities of other animals, we find that other animals have these unique and amazing capabilities, that human beings in many cases, don't. So I'm not really talking about better or worse, but what I am talking about kind of are the origins [00:14:00] of diversity and recognition that human beings have their capabilities and other animals have their capabilities and that we don't necessarily have to only look at animals through whether or not they're like us. And unfortunately, people routinely do this where we, you know, if they look like a baby or remind us of a child, or, um, are designed in ways that meet our human kind of centric orientation and needs. Then they get more value. Some of the most important animals on the face of the planet in terms of the planet's health are not animals, that many people value, things like bats for example, that are critical for the, for the health, for public health and for the health of the planet.

[00:14:50] And yet most people probably don't spend much time thinking about the importance of their relationship with those types of animals. So, so one of the wonderful things [00:15:00] about my work, I suppose, that I value more than anything else is it's really allowed me to reflect on diversity and the significance of our interconnectedness with other animals, including the

environment, the living environment, and at the heart of the therapeutic process, which I'm sure we'll talk a little bit about, is this understanding that health is optimized when we're in contact with other healthy living systems and other animals. And that that's really the basis of my new book.

[00:15:33] **Laura Reagan:** Wow. Yes. I love that perspective and I know it's true, but it just is, seems like it's just becoming that message is just becoming amplified in our culture. Just beginning to be really more mainstream that we exist for connection with others and, we're all there's a big ecosystem here, it's all working together and we're part of it. It's not just [00:16:00] the place we live and the things that are around us to serve us, which is kind of the way human development in terms of like civilization and the perspective, you know, that that brings has been. It's like there's people and then there's the non-humans, which are not worth as much.

[00:16:18] **Philip Tedeschi:** Yeah, that's exactly right. I mean, and we do, we have, you know, a lot to reason for people who care about animals to be frustrated and upset these days, because we are seeing such a level of irresponsible and callous kind of regard for protection of other animals and it, and it does ultimately relate to our wellbeing as well.

[00:16:40] And, I think it's one of the areas that I hope other mental health practitioners, particularly social workers, I think should understand this because we use terms like person in environment or systems theory as our grounded concepts for most of our work. And yet when we've talked about that [00:17:00] historically the field of social work often has not meant living environment or green environment but built environment or the human kind of environment around us.

[00:17:11] And ironically, I think we will be in a time if we're not already in the, as time where literally every social worker should be trained and understand this and the implications of our connectedness to healthy living ecological systems and other animals, because these will be ultimately critical aspects of human health. And even human security and they're the, so they're the building blocks of good child, psychological health, and good physical health early in our lives. But ultimately, they impact us throughout our entire life. So it's a very, very important area for us to be talking about. I think as practitioners.

[00:17:54] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, I agree. And I wholeheartedly agree with what you said about that we [00:18:00] don't often consider that as social

workers, and I'm glad that since you're a part of the process of education social workers, you have that perspective to bring.

[00:18:11] **Philip Tedeschi:** Yeah, it's been a real joy working with students. I teach in a program at the University of Denver.

[00:18:18] That's all graduates. It's an all-graduate program and I'm always amazed by the students that arrive in our program because they have been thinking about this. And many of them clearly understand the significance. In fact, often what has drawn them into this inquiry professional inquiry has been, that animals have already been significant in their lives.

[00:18:41] I've had many students tell me that they've had an interaction with an animal that literally saved their life. And I'm sure that there are some of your listeners who will probably relate to that. Where, you know, at a time and a place, for example, where other people couldn't reach them [00:19:00] or where they didn't trust other people.

[00:19:02] In fact, one of the primary places we see animal assisted interventions being very important and highlighted in this book is circumstances where our trust in human beings has been lost. And what happens to somebody who can no longer trust? Well, those are often the persons who end up in our offices, in our carceral systems, in crisis and often in tremendous amounts of pain that can create problems for themselves and others.

[00:19:36] **Laura Reagan:** Yes. Yes. And you're bringing to mind programs that I've heard about equine programs at prisons and for veterans with PTSD programs that are specifically tailored towards people who have been harmed and may have also done harm to other humans or [00:20:00] animals and how, you know, the tenderness. That's what comes up for me is like the tenderness that one can develop in relationship with an animal that may feel too threatening with a human.

[00:20:13] **Philip Tedeschi:** Yeah, I think that's right. And you know, probably the most, some of the most exciting scientific and research developments in our field have been to understand that when we're in a safe interaction with an animal that it can actually change our interpersonal neurobiology to the degree that it may allow individuals who have previously been, unreachable or in many cases, what we sometimes refer to as treatment resistant or untreatable to have new tools with those populations. And I'll just give you an example of a few.

[00:20:59] In this book, [00:21:00] transforming trauma, we highlight kind of three primary areas, one being child developmental trauma, which we would most people would recognize, often now even call it a syndrome, for those children who have been chronically exposed to maltreatment throughout their lives, often at the hands of their own caretakers.

[00:21:22] We also look at post-traumatic stress and it's movement from being a pathology or a disorder to resilience and what caused, what allows us to potentially work with post-traumatic stress in ways that create improved outcomes. And then we've also in this book, looked at more atypical aspects, including however, not limited to mass casualty school shootings, natural disasters, war, for example, in fact I was just [00:22:00] recently in Israel working on a project there where we've just opened the very first prison canine program in the middle east, that pairs street dogs with persons who are in an Israeli prison in Northern Israel, along the Syrian border and looking at these various applications, how animals can work in these various contexts. One of the things that's just amazing is that those are all almost all examples of various kinds of trauma where the brain has been altered by their experience of the threatening or traumatic event.

[00:22:38] And that one of the things we're trying to do, and most of our trauma kind of informed intervention models is to retrain the brain. To give it, you know, to allow that individual, to use their body and their brain to respond to their environment accurately. And one of the things that has come out of this work [00:23:00] is this understanding of what we call the polyvagal theory.

[00:23:03] And in that theory, is another concept we refer to as neuroception and neuroception refers to preconscious awareness of wellbeing or threat, which often is hard to identify and hard to work with for us as clinicians because by the time somebody is able to talk about their trauma, they're conscious about the often in many cases, the symptoms of that trauma, or are the triggers for that trauma, but many people experienced trauma and are impacted by their trauma in ways that are preconscious or even subconscious.

[00:23:42] And this concept of neuroception is referring to that idea. And one of the things that having the presence of safe animals or thriving living systems are immediately around us is that information informs our neuroception what we call a [00:24:00] neuroception of safety. And that becomes the early basis for shifting neurobiology, making somebody more accessible, more talkable, more trusting.

[00:24:11] So for example, in the presence of a safe dog, a therapist often looks more trustworthy than a therapist without a safe dog present. And that simple presence of an animal who is demonstrating that they're confident in that person or comfortable in the presence of those provides this neuroceptive information.

[00:24:34] This pre-information that allows treatability to be much more likely, once we get started in our more traditional methodologies for trauma treatment.

[00:24:46] **Laura Reagan:** Running a group private practice has been a challenging and rewarding experience. And one thing that has made it so much easier is Therapy Notes. Therapy Notes makes billing, scheduling, note-taking, and telehealth incredibly easy. If you're [00:25:00] coming from another EHR, like I did, therapy notes makes the transition incredibly easy, importing your demographic data free of charge so you can get going right away. My team has found Therapy Notes, very easy to learn. It's intuitive. The customer support is second to none, and that's one of the things that has kept me a Therapy Notes customer for several years now. Anytime I've needed to contact Therapy Notes for help with an issue, I couldn't figure out on my own. I've been able to get through to someone and resolve the issue within 15 minutes, 99% of the time. Find out what more than a hundred thousand mental health professionals already know try therapy notes for two months, absolutely free. Just click on the link in the show notes or enter the promo code chat at therapynotes.com. That makes so much sense. And it brings up one of the questions that was on my mind about using animals in therapy. [00:26:00] And, I'm thinking about I'll disclose that I have intended, I just haven't gotten around to it, but I have intended to do your animal assisted therapy certificate program at the University of Denver.

[00:26:17] And I've been on the waiting list. And then every time the cohort opens, I'm like, oh, it's not the right time, but I'm keeping on getting those emails. But you know, what made me want to sign up for that was wanting to offer having the services of a therapy dog in my practice, but I knew, and partly from talking with other clinicians that it's not just having your pet dog there with you at work, you know, and you and the dog is in the room and the clients get to pet the dog, or if they want to, or the dog might sit by them, it seems there's a lot more to it, which is why I haven't [00:27:00] just A. why I haven't started bringing my dog to my practice yet. And B. Why I haven't signed up for the program yet, because I know there's a lot to understand about it.

[00:27:09] **Philip Tedeschi:** Well, you know, there, there is a lot to understand about it, but you know, one of the things that you're saying, I'll just put this out there as a, um, maybe as a consideration, you know, the origins of our field in

some ways, at least the modern day origins of incorporation of an animal in a, in a psychotherapy session could be traced back to people like Dr. Boris Levinson, who, you know, also snuck his dog into his own office because he just liked having his dogs with him. He was a child psychologist, and you know what he noticed in short order was that the child client in his office would get out of their chairs and they'd sit on the floor.

[00:27:50] And they would often sit with his dog, his dogs, and then he would find himself awkwardly sitting above the child in his chair. And so he would get [00:28:00] out of his chair and then sit on the floor and in the process of then routinely bringing these animals in and then seeing how his clients responded and then changing his own behavior and then sharing this animal as they were putting it together, he started to recognize that he saw about twice as much verbal participation from these child clients in a therapy session than without, and he gave one of the earliest presentations at the American Psychological Association back in the 1960s and was you know, at that time laughed at and not taken very seriously what he was seeing, however in that shift in his client's willingness to talk is the oxytocin system being activated and the child being safe in that context.

[00:28:50] And so ironically some of the ways in which we might incorporate animals to be quite important and therapeutic, there are more complex [00:29:00] ways, but they're also very simple ways. And by having the presence of a safe animal in our lives, it changes us. It changes our physiology and ultimately, changes the way in which we interact with the environment around us.

[00:29:15] That's probably our best explanation for why about 75 million people have dogs in their homes today and why we're so connected to our companion animals. I mean, I think that average dog gets seven gifts a year. You know, and, and Valentine's day is the most popular day to give gifts on, right? So this is a real love affair, not by accident, but because we actually often have some of our best times and feel happy in the presence of our companion animals. And they feel that way around us too, in most cases.

[00:29:51] **Laura Reagan:** That's pretty validating in terms of the, just having the animal there and how it can help both probably the therapist [00:30:00] and the client to feel more relaxed and more comfortable to allow the therapeutic relationship to unfold. That's reassuring that just, that is valuable.

[00:30:11] **Philip Tedeschi:** Yeah. And I think and then to your own interest and maybe other, some of your listeners are, have been thinking about the same

thing was well the main area if I was to point to kind of one of the big competencies we look for and why we run programs for education and training for practitioners and clinicians is, is really developing our ethics kind of turning into ethicists, alongside the skills necessary to be a good therapist with an animal.

[00:30:41] It really is this idea of whether or not we had sensitized ourselves to and taken the time to learn what are the implications are for choosing to use another sentient being. And I, and I use that term use intentionally because we are making a decision to put [00:31:00] them in that situation. And as a result, we have a deep responsibility to them.

[00:31:04] It's unlike any other therapy where we wouldn't say, you know, I'm going to use my child for that purpose, or I'm going to use a prop about another human being for that purpose. Every other intervention is really in, you know, allows that practitioner to make a conscious decision to be in that role. And we're making that decision for the animals that work with us.

[00:31:27] So that has both a moral dimension to it. In other words, is it the right thing for us to do, to incorporate an animal? And if so, what kinds of animals in which animals could benefit or have a positive experience doing that work with us? And then secondarily, it brings up a question of how do we go about becoming then supportive and a good advocate for the animals that are working with us to ensure that their wellbeing is, is really an important [00:32:00] part of our agenda. That is also turns out to be a great focus because it's the vehicle by which therapeutic benefits transfer. We would not get a therapeutic benefit from having an animal that's in distress or being harmed in a therapeutic environment. In fact, there's reason to believe that it would be just the opposite, that it would be significant risk factors involved. Um, you probably have, you know, bad, poor outcomes or, or at least unfortunate outcomes by incorporating an animal that really isn't well-suited to participate in the kinds of work we're talking.

[00:32:36] **Laura Reagan:** Yes, one thing I'm thinking of there and I'm so glad you brought up the ethics and moral issue, because that was one of the things I wanted to ask you about. But what comes to mind for me is the idea if you were doing therapy using a horse in the work. And the horse was really not voluntarily consenting or not consenting [00:33:00] at all to the process, but just sort of dissociated and how to me, it could mirror when you're working with someone who's experienced trauma, you know, their felt sense feels that dissociation and it can be retraumatizing.

[00:33:14] **Philip Tedeschi:** Yeah. I think that's, uh, there certainly is potential for that. It might also be like a, what would it be like to have a therapist who doesn't really want to be there, those sorts of things. And I think the term you used. Is a, is an interesting one, the concept of consent.

[00:33:31] And it goes back to our early discussions about, can we actually speak, you know, do we understand other animals? And can we speak with other animals? Well, it turns out that, you know, if we're waiting for an animal to, to say to us, you know, I don't really want to be here, get me out of here. Um, we're going to be waiting a long time, but if we are observant and if we do believe in ethology and the understanding that animals have complex emotions and are [00:34:00] sentient and have thoughts of their own, that like with human beings often shows up in observable actions and behaviors that as we've started to learn more about how to communicate with animals, particularly dogs and horses, and I would say cats and some other domestic farm animals, I think can also fall in this category. Dogs are probably the most identifiably clear communicators with us in part, because they've been evolving alongside human beings for tens of thousands of years and this co-evolution or what we call it, evolutionary continuity.

[00:34:39] This connection allows dogs now to be literally the smartest animal relative to human emotion human communication, human affect, and conversely, we understand a lot about what dogs are communicating. And so the animals that we have, the best [00:35:00] ability to have that kind of level of synchronicity or good communication with often allows us to do a better job, incorporating them in the work we're doing in ways that are ethical and appropriate.

[00:35:13] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, that makes sense. It's like they know how to communicate the way that we can understand, because they're evolving in a way they're smarter because they've learned how to adapt to us so that we can understand them so we say, oh, dogs are smart cause we can understand.

[00:35:35] **Philip Tedeschi:** Well. Yeah. And I think your comments about cats were interesting.

[00:35:38] I was just going to say, I think cats are a species that we've been evolving with, but not for quite as long. And they're a very different species than dogs. They have a lot of different needs than a dog does. And so if we're thinking of our cat is just a tiny dog, we're going to be frustrated because that's not who they are.

[00:35:57] Right. And yet, if we really study [00:36:00] feline behavior and learn about cats, cats are, are very intelligent and very capable of communicating a lot of information to us and also are very different species with different needs than us.

[00:36:12] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yes. I feel that. And with as a cat lover, I've had many cats and I've witnessed how they sense and understand a lot more than we do in many situations about what's going on, even in our own emotions and how they can't really tell us, but if we can learn to understand what they are trying to tell us with their body language, there's a lot there.

[00:36:40] **Philip Tedeschi:** Absolutely. There was also interestingly enough, quite a lot of intersectionality cats are one of the most targeted animals for interpersonal kind of violence in the home.

[00:36:53] Often when we have kind of unpackage the cause of cats being such a target for [00:37:00] this is that many of the controllers and persons engaged in this harm directed at cats attribute whether they're female or male cats attribute female qualities to those cats and often describe them in similarly pejorative ways to the quite aggressive ways that many men, for example, who target women for violence, will talk about the rationale for needing to control or be abusive in their intimate partner relationships.

[00:37:33] **Laura Reagan:** That's a point I've never thought of, but that sounds very true to me. So, Philip, I'm sad that our time is already coming to an end and we really barely got to talk about your book, but can you give maybe a brief little summary for our audience, and maybe you can return in the future if you're willing to, but for now, could you give our audience just a little brief [00:38:00] summary of really who this book is for and how it can be used? What you've already described sounds very interesting. So I'm sure you're going to find a lot of people wanting to buy it after they hear this.

[00:38:10] **Philip Tedeschi:** I hope they do. It was definitely a work of a love, and it took us about four years and emanated out of our conference that was named the same thing called Transforming Trauma.

[00:38:24] And by the way, I'll just mention for persons very interested in this area. We have conferences every year at the university and then alternating years, we partner with a program called green chimneys in Brewster New York to put on, major conferences that are for those people, really wanting to learn more about the intersection between human health and animals.

[00:38:51] These would be good conferences to maybe take a look at so four years ago we ran a conference called Transforming Trauma, where we were [00:39:00] highlighting kind of the new work being done in this area. That was the impetus for the book it's published by Purdue press and, uh, and the foreword of this book, which I was very happy he agreed to do this was provided by Dr. Bruce Perry, who is well we'd know, Dr. Bruce Perry is probably the leading child trauma specialist in the United States. And for many years has been an important researcher in the area of child developmental trauma as the founder of the trauma, child trauma network and also the Neurosequential Model for treating trauma in child developmental trauma. And in that model and he talks about this right in the forward of the book is this recognition that we often, really need to build into the interactions with children who have, whose trust has been so harmed by [00:40:00] these, by this chronic maltreatment is positive interactions that are both safe and pleasurable and rewire the brain through the very kinds of changes in interpersonal neurobiology that I was just discussing that occurs with our interactions with safe animals. And he, as a result has been very supportive of the inclusion of animal assisted interventions in many of the programs that are operating under his supervision, including one of our primary programs here in Denver.

[00:40:33] That the dog that's that's sitting right under my desk at the moment is a dog who works at this child trauma academy. And, so I'd say for people who had like, you know, who are working as trauma specialists and who are interested in this area, I think you'll find this book illuminating.

[00:40:52] We also try to cover non-traditional methodologies, including, and just one example I'll give [00:41:00] is the role that animals play even street dogs, unwanted dogs can play in places like central Uganda and treating the survivors of the Ugandan civil war, who in many cases have very few or no resources for mental health recovery.

[00:41:18] They may not even necessarily use the term post-traumatic stress and yet, dogs are being deployed as ways to help those individuals recover. So we're starting to see this occur all over the world. We have students on every continent in the world, except for, I think Antarctica at this point and we're thrilled that people are starting to think rethink their relationships with other animals whether they choose to incorporate them as a therapist, or even if they're just trying to deepen the relationships with their own animals.

[00:41:53] I think those are is time really well spent. So this book, I think, gets into a lot [00:42:00] of that as well as, quite a deep dive into the ethical responsibilities of, of our work with other animals.

[00:42:08] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you. Sorry for all the noise, but my dog is getting very excited cause she sees a squirrel outside .

[00:42:20] Well, I think your book sounds amazing and I hope our audience is gonna go and grab it up. But I know you also do you have the program at the university as well as you do consultation with clinicians as well is that, right.

[00:42:38] **Philip Tedeschi:** That's right. So I do consultation with clinicians who are interested in thinking about this as par or maybe are already doing this work.

[00:42:46] Um, and as, uh, through distance supervision, And we also do have a number of educational and academic programs. If they're interested in that, probably the easiest way [00:43:00] to get familiar with that is, is just search Institute for human animal connection that will bring you to our program at the University of Denver.

[00:43:10] And there is a live link to a number of the programs that we run there, including our humane education professional training called raising compassionate kids, which is focused on training professionals to do intervention with early learners. Uh, we also have specializations with equine assisted mental health and canine assisted intervention specializations.

[00:43:34] And then also a professional development certificate called animals and human health, which is probably the most in-depth distance learning training for, we would consider that to be professional development training, and then people who are really looking for, to do this work professionally, who are wanting to get a terminal degree.

[00:43:58] We have our [00:44:00] on-campus MSW program with a specialization in animal assisted social work. And that is done onsite and here in Denver.

[00:44:08] **Laura Reagan:** That's awesome. I'm so glad for everything you and your programming, your university are doing to bring this work to a wider audience, and I'm very grateful that you were able to take the time to be my guest today.

[00:44:24] **Philip Tedeschi:** Well, thank you. Yeah. Thank you. We love talking about our work. And we'd be glad to come back and talk about other dimensions of it if it's of interest to your listeners and, and I'm glad to do it anytime.

[00:44:37] **Laura Reagan:** I will definitely ask you to set up another time to do that. And I'm, I'm so grateful.

[00:44:43] Thank you so much, Philip.

[00:44:44] **Philip Tedeschi:** Thank you.

[00:44:47] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you to Therapy Notes for sponsoring this week's episode. I do love therapy notes. It's such an asset to my business and makes my job as a practice owner and a therapist, much easier. Try today with no strings attached to see [00:45:00] why everyone is switching to Therapy Notes.

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